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In memoriam:  
Egbert Guernsey...

[n.p.]

[1903]

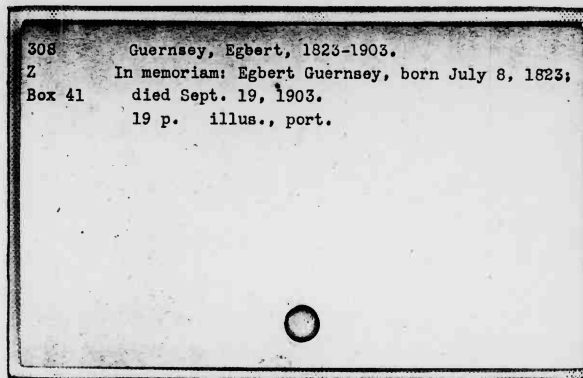
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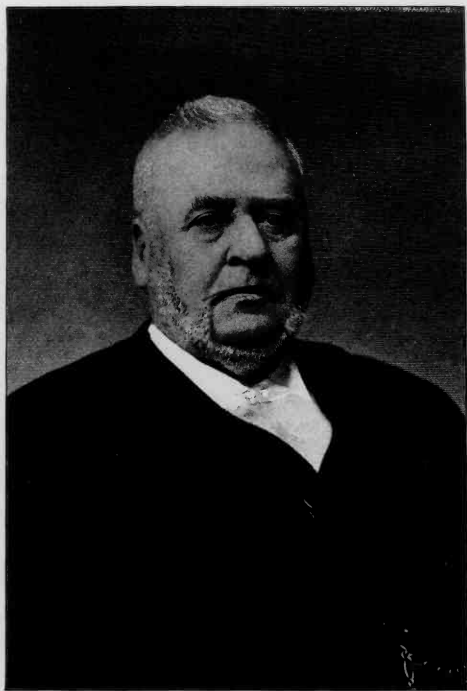
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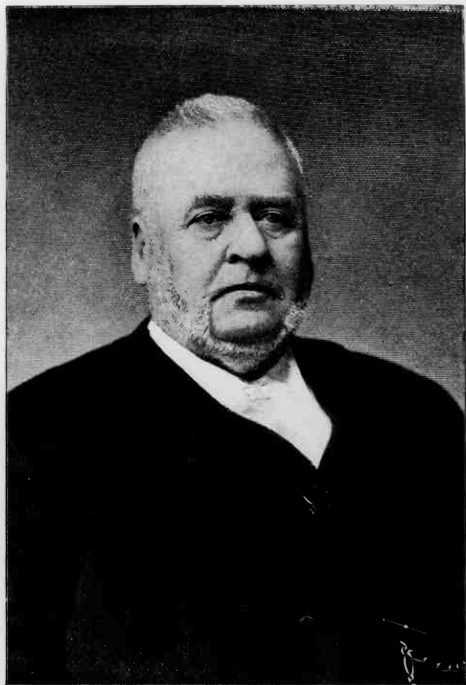
DEC

1877



Ebert Guernsey M.D. L.L.D.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE



*Ebert Guernsey M.D. LL.D.*

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Box 41

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In Memoriam

ROBERT GUERASEY

Born July 8, 1823

Died Sept. 19, 1903

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MS B. 2. 9. 17

THERE is no sublimer spectacle than death when it comes to a man in the fullness of his years and faculties, with the consciousness that he shall awake on the other side of the shaded valley. Most men die with the *hope* of living again, but EGBERT GUERNSEY died with the *knowledge* that in death he sleeps but to awake.

To the inner circle of his relatives and friends, the death of DR. GUERNSEY was a melancholy event. Their sense of bereavement in his loss will long endure, for his place in their hearts can never be filled. But to the outer circle of his friends and acquaintances, his death was the most natural and fitting incident in his long and brilliant career. Many of the latter circle may justly covet his good fortune in death as in life. He had done his work, finished his course. What more could one desire? He had lived as few men do, to see the fruition of his labors and the realization of his hopes. Could anything be more gratifying? While we can but mourn with those who have lost his helpful companionship for a few brief years, the hearty grasp of his hand, and the warm glow of his sympathy and affection, we would, nevertheless, grasp his hand "across the bar," and congratulate him on the incident that came to him in the death chamber, on that

memorable 19th of September, so happy was it in its broader relation and significance.

No man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. What he is and must be may be found in his antecedents. And so in DR. GUERNSEY's ancestry are found the elements which evolved themselves in his character and career. These have been traced by a hand more gentle and loving than the writer's, and, at the same time, a hand whose relation was nearer and dearer to him.

She writes: "DR. EGBERT GUERNSEY, the subject of this Tribute, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1823, and died at his country seat, Fishkill-on-Hudson, September 19, 1903. His remote ancestors were English, distinguished for public spirit, the more prominent of which were strongly imbued with the spirit of civil and religious liberty, which was likewise strongly characteristic of the modern GUERNSEY.

"The first man by the name of GUERNSEY that came to this country was JOHN GUERNSEY, a native of the Isle of Guernsey. The subject of this Tribute was the twelfth generation from him. This JOHN GUERNSEY came to America in 1638, and was one of the one hundred and eighty sturdy Puritans that removed from Boston to



found the colony of New Haven. He was a prominent member of that colony, and was one of the protectors of the regicides, Goffe and Whalley. His descendants took an active part in the settlement of New England and the subsequent struggle for Independence, no less than thirteen of them having served in the Revolutionary Army.

"JOHN GUERNSEY's great-grandson, by the same name, was born at Woodbury, Connecticut, and removed to Amenia, Dutchess County, New York. His son, NOAH GUERNSEY, was born there. He married Hannah Hollister, a direct descendant of William Clinton, first Earl of Huntington (1350), whose descendant was made Earl of Lincoln, which was later merged into that of the Duke of Newcastle. The first mentioned JOHN GUERNSEY had a son who also bore the name of Noah, and who married Amanda Crosby, daughter of William Crosby, and a kinswoman of Enoch Crosby, the famous Revolutionary spy. To Noah and Amanda (Crosby) Guernsey, the subject of this sketch, EGBERT GUERNSEY, was born, at Litchfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1823.

"Young EGBERT was carefully educated and prepared for college at Phillips' Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, whence he entered the scientific department at Yale.

Before completing his college course, however, he determined to devote himself to medicine, and accordingly entered the office of the celebrated Dr. Valentine Mott, as a student. Soon after he became a student in the Medical College of New York University, of which Dr. Mott was one of the Professors, and in 1846, was graduated with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. He also received the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine, from the University of the State of New York, and later that of Doctor of Laws, from the College of St. Francis Xavier.

DR. GUERNSEY began the practice of medicine in Williamsburg, 1846, and soon after was appointed City Physician. In 1850, he removed to Fishkill-on-Hudson for a year or two, and then returned to New York City, where he built up a large and lucrative practice and acquired a strong and influential following.

"At about this time DR. GUERNSEY became acquainted with Dr. John F. Gray and other physicians who were infected with the medical heresies of Hahnemann, and was quick to imbibe some of the doctrines of that sage, who was then in his zenith, and the methods of Homöopathy. He also became a teacher of the new faith, being for six years Professor of Materia Medica and Theory

and Practice in the New York Homœopathic Medical College, of which he was one of the founders. He was also one of the founders and the first president of the Western Dispensary, afterward united with the Hahnemann Hospital, with which he was associated. He was instrumental in having the Inebriates' Asylum on Ward's Island converted into a general hospital under the direction of the Department of Charities, and placed in the hands of the Homœopathic school of practice. That was in 1877. Since then, he has been President of the Medical staff of the Metropolitan Hospital, now removed to Blackwell's Island, which is ranked by the Commissioner of Charities as one of the best of the great public hospitals of New York.

"DR. GUERNSEY was one of the founders of the State Hospital for the Insane at Middletown, New York, and was for nineteen years a trustee and four years Vice-President of it. From this position he was dropped by the late Governor Flower, the good governor being misled by the devices of envious wire-pulling rivals. He was the founder also of the Training School for Nurses at the Hahnemann and Metropolitan Hospitals. He has been President of the New York State and County Medi-

cal Societies, and from 1864 to 1868 was Surgeon of the Sixth Regiment of the National Guard of the State of New York.

"The record of DR. GUERNSEY's public work without a brief reference to his literary career, would not be complete. Before his graduation from the University Medical College he was City Editor of 'The Evening Mirror,' being thus associated with Nathaniel Parker Willis and George P. Morris. He founded 'The Brooklyn Daily Times' in 1848, and for two years was its editor. In 1852 he was one of the editors of 'Jahr's Manual,' and in 1872 he founded 'The Medical Union,' which was ultimately merged into the 'New York Medical Times,' of which he has ever since been the senior editor. Early in his professional career he wrote a school history of the United States, which long ranked as a standard text book. His 'Domestic Practice,' published in 1855, has passed through many editions and been translated into several languages. His miscellaneous contributions to medical literature have been voluminous.

"DR. GUERNSEY was one of the founders of the Union League Club of New York, of which he was a member at his death. He was a life member of the New York

Geographical and Historical Societies, and the Academy of Science, and belonged to various other scientific and literary organizations.

"DR. GUERNSEY was married in 1848 to Sarah Leferts Schenck, a descendant of Edgar de Schenken, who was Seneschal to Charlemagne, and of his descendant, Johannes Schenck, who came to this country from Holland in 1663. She was descended also from the Lefferts family, and from the Meseroles, a Huguenot family of Picardy, and a woman of clear perceptions and broad mind, in full sympathy with her husband's ambitions, and animated by the same high purpose—that of living for others. Five children were the fruits of this union, of whom but one, Florence, survives, Dr Egbert Guernsey, Jr., dying in early manhood, the other three, in infancy."

Apart from DR. GUERNSEY's relations to the founding and development of the public institutions of New York, his influence on the progress of the profession of medicine was not less noteworthy. A man is always bigger than his task, and character is of vastly more consequence than achievement. How great that is doth not appear until after he dies, and the seed he hath sown bears fruit. It may be a few years, or a few centuries, as in the

case of Hippocrates, or the divine Nazarine. Though not insensible to public opinion, the approval of his fellow men, and the honors of position and preferment, DR. GUERNSEY was ever the champion of the right and the ethically true, whatever of consequence to himself. With him, these last were ever primary; personal emoluments and ambition ever secondary. With him profession and performance must accord or supplement each other. When the strife between the sects in medicine was at its height, and the struggle for dominance between the factions of the new school was the bitterest, DR. GUERNSEY was found in the fore-front, standing steadfast in the interest of truth and progress, regardless of his personal fortunes. This is not the place to dilate upon the conflicts of rival and antagonistic schools, and the struggles of the ambitious—not to say, the unscrupulous—for place and power now happily composed; but no adequate idea of the high character and purpose of the man could be set forth wholly disconnected from them. In them the character of the man shines most conspicuous. To this end, the following extract from the "Salutatory" upon issuing the "Medical Union," a monthly journal of the medical sciences, the first issue of which was in January,

1875, may not be out of place:

The great object of the physician should be, not only to cure, but to guard against the inroads or disease. . . . The questions that should ever ring in the ears should be: What is truth? How can I best bring the teachings of nature to subserve the interests of humanity? . . . In coming before the public with a new journal for its approval, we come, not wedded to old ideas, nor bound hand and foot to any philosophy.

Gentlemen of the so-called Allopathic, or as you prefer calling yourselves the Regular School of medicine, if you wish for reconciliation we are quite willing to meet you half way. To your sneers and your ridicule we have replied by an array of facts; and we challenge you to disprove them. We have let the sunlight of truth into much that was unscientific in your practice. You have tried to crush us out of existence by your bitter opposition; your refusal to recognize us as physicians; your closing the doors of hospitals and asylum boards against us; your determination that we shall occupy no places on the Army and Navy Surgical and Medical staff, and the prompt expulsion, or suspension of all members of your societies who have the independence to meet us in council. Deprived of all fair representation in your medical journals, thrust out persistently from hospitals, asylums and dispensaries established for the public good, and supported by our money as well as yours, we have been compelled to establish them of our own. Because you have compelled us to adopt this course, you now taunt us with being sectarian and adherents of an exclusive dogma.

Surely nothing could be more dignified and manly than the attitude that DR. GUERNSEY thus assumed in his

noble plea for the unity of medical faith and practice. Unfortunately, it remained to him a few years later, to appeal to his own colleagues for larger liberty of opinion, to drop the false, the untenable, and fictitious, and to accept the demonstrations of experience.

It will suffice to say in this connection that the attitude assumed by DR. GUERNSEY and his coadjutors towards those of the New School, who fomented sects and schisms within its ranks, or adhered to the obsolete, was the same—always for the sake of truth, and never for the end of personal aggrandisement. Happy was he to have lived to see the general acceptance of his views, the wisdom of his course acknowledged, and the fruits of his labors realized.

Mentally, DR. GUERNSEY was the peer of great men. Not that he was an inventor, or a discoverer in science, the originator of new ideas or systems of philosophy; or that he was a great author, or a man greatly distinguished in Letters. His talents were too diffused for that. But his was a receptive mind. He quickly saw the truth when it was presented to him—even its foregleams—as one on the mountain top first sees the morning's sun, before its gleams are discerned by the plodder in the valley. He was

a "Sensitive," that is to say, he often felt, and was moved by, powers and influences above the zone of mentality in which the vast majority of mankind live and move. Moreover, he had by natural endowment great breadth of understanding and marked ability to discern trends and possibilities. He was a man of Faith, faith in God as a living working force; faith in the Divine immanence, by which he saw harmony as the outcome of discord, unity as the result of division, and glorious benefactions to come to humanity when the storm and stress of strife and dissension shall have been composed and succeeded by an era of co-operation, peace and good-will—to an extraordinary degree. The cast of his mind was high, the spiritual side of his nature having been early developed. He was the soul of honor and integrity. With all the calumny of which at one time he was the victim, his bitterest opponent never accused him of a meanness, or an act unworthy a man and a gentleman. Thinking no evil, he never was the prey of suspicion of evil in others. Naturally, therefore, he was often the dupe of the cunning and designing. Nevertheless, he lived "with malice towards none."

DR. GUERNSEY had a warm, sympathetic personality. His sympathy went out to the wronged and suffering

everywhere. He was led by it to works of charity and benevolence. Many young men and young women were the objects of his solicitude, and the recipients of his helpful benefactions. His very last act, in momentary expectation of death, was to sign a recommendation for a young man to a position in the Civil Service; nor could he be persuaded to defer it, lest he should not be able to do it at a later hour, and the poor fellow should fail of his quest. Scores of students of medicine, many of whom are now honored, learned and successful physicians, owe their entrance to the profession to him. His fidelity in business, in love and friendship never failed. These virtues drew friends to him by the score from every rank of life. He was the professional adviser of the distinguished in science and letters, in politics and commerce, and his acquaintance was sought by advanced thinkers in the higher departments of knowledge.

The following characteristic letter to his beloved and only daughter, written in the confidence of a loving father, shows the sunny and illuminative side of his nature, as well as the clearness of his conceptions, though at the time a victim of severe and irremediable suffering. This was written about one month before his decease:

August 9, 1903.

Dear Florence:—What a living picture this month has been of life; sunshine and rain, heat and cold, the crash of thunder, the flash of lightning, the war of the storm, and then the soft pure air, the sweetness, the fresh life and the repose of nature. We can almost hear vibrating through the seasons the voice of the Master, "*Peace be Still*," Friday the clearness and freshness of the air reminded of the Rocky Mountains. Not a discordant note in all nature. Life was so sweet, so beautiful, that it was a luxury to live, and every breath was an inspiration. To-day it is cloudy and colder, but we still feel the prolonged spell of that wave of life and harmony which seemed to open the gates of Heaven. \* \* \* All is harmony and every one quietly does her work. Your barn festival was a scene from "Midsummer Night's Dream," was it not? Or was it something better? I send you a clipping of the College which conferred Dr. Cook his degree. With love to all. E. G.

For a similar purpose, and to disclose the deeply spiritual side of his nature, the following epistle to a bereaved friend, and the last letter he ever wrote, is of double interest:

Dear Mrs. Tyson:—It is hardly necessary for me to send my tribute of love to the memory of one of my oldest and best friends who has just passed into another room of our Father's many mansions, for I but voice the sentiment of all who know him. He left to his family a richer legacy than gold and silver in an unsullied name, a noble and pure life in which as husband, father and loyal friend were embodied the living principles of

the Christian teachings, which he lived and of which he was a shining example. Please accept for yourself and convey to your children my warmest sympathy for the loss of companionship to you all. Just a little while and we both shall cross the silent river. God grant you all as bright a promise for the future as that of the husband, the father and the friend whose body we placed beneath the sod. E. G.

Of the many tributes of love and appreciation of Dr. GUERNSEY but a few can be given here. The following from the pen of an old loved and loving friend, the late Bret Harte, gave great pleasure to him of whom it was written:

A man of broad culture and broader experience; a man who had devoted the greater part of his active life to the alleviation of sorrow and suffering; a man who had lived up to the noble vows of a noble profession; a man who locked in his honorable breast the secrets of a hundred families, whose face was as kindly, whose touch was as gentle in the wards of the great public hospital as it was beside the lace curtains of the dying Narcissa; a man who, through long contact with suffering, had acquired a universal tenderness and breadth of kindly philosophy; a man who, by day and night, was at the beck and call of anguish; a man who never asked the creed, belief, moral or worldly standing of the sufferer, or even his ability to pay the few coins that enabled him (the physician) to exist and practice his calling; in brief, a man who so nearly lived up to the example of the great Master that it seems strange, I am writing of him as a doctor of Medicine and not of Divinity.

In a Memorial address delivered before the New York County Homœopathic Medical Society, at its monthly meeting, November 12, 1903, Dr. Marshall Orlando Terry, a physician of broad culture and liberal ideas, and a lifelong friend and colleague of Dr. GUERNSEY, spoke in terms highly eulogistic of his deceased friend's character and attainments, of which only a few lines are here given :

The medical profession of New York will always admire the work done by DOCTOR GUERNSEY in the interest of medical progress. All differences will disappear like the dew in the morning; and when the name of EGBERT GUERNSEY is mentioned it will stand synonymous with good fellowship, higher education, liberty of opinion and action, and for all that pertains to the high moral or ethical relations of man to man. It will stand with a credit for a profound interest in humanity regardless of wealth or rank. It will bring to mind the earnest logic which he was ever ready to offer when dealing with subjects of unusual interest. And lastly, it will remind us that in spite of defeat, or failure to succeed in regard to given subjects under consideration, nothing but the most manly methods were ever entertained for the purpose of accomplishing the ends desired.

Dr. Alfred Kimball Hills, a man of genial sympathies, distinguished for his conservative views and judicial judgment, who for more than a quarter of a century was associated with Dr. GUERNSEY in the conduct of the "New York Medical Times," and who had opportunities

to know him intimately in all his professional, business and personal relations, paid him the following tender and graceful tribute on the occasion of the celebration of Dr. GUERNSEY's medical semi-centennial :

It has been my privilege to know the man I am proud to call my friend for many years, and intimately, too. I have seen him under various circumstances, in joy, in sorrow, in success, and in the time that tries men's souls, but no matter what were the conditions or environment, the sweet, tender, child-like nature would assert its truthfulness, with the unbounded confidence that all would ultimately be well.

On the same interesting occasion, a Loving Cup of most beautiful design and inscription was presented to Dr. GUERNSEY by the Medical Board and the Alumni Association of the Metropolitan Hospital, in the following respectful and appreciative language :

To our revered and beloved colleague, Egbert Guernsey, who, having received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of New York, March 9, 1846, this day, by divine favor, witnessing the fiftieth anniversary of that occasion, we, the members of the Medical Board and of the Alumni Association of the Metropolitan Hospital of New York and other friends, offer our affectionate congratulation and good wishes.

Dr. David Allyn Gorton, an author and essayist of repute and a colleague, friend and coadjutor of Dr. GUERNSEY during a third of a century, pays a just and appropriate tribute to the character of his loved friend in

the following appreciative sonnet:

Farewell, comrade! Thy work on earth is done;  
For years three-score thou'st steadfast stood for right  
'Gainst error and schisms, with prophetic sight—  
'Gainst conceits and myths, that under the sun  
Gain place and power and rank ignobly won.  
Nobly hast thou wrought in the unequal fight,  
Nobly hast thou won by faith in truth and right,—  
Nothing less could be from thy exalted zone.  
Virtues rare thou had'st, 'mongst them Charity,  
Which no evil thinketh; the love of Truth,—  
The supremest virtue; and from thy youth,  
Love of Man and of largest Liberty.  
If "glory 'bides when calumny hath fled,"  
Character survives the departed dead.

One often hears it said, when a great man dies, that  
"His place cannot be filled;" "He cannot be spared;"  
"His loss is irreparable," etc. Such observations have  
been made of the beloved subject of this Tribute. The  
sentiment that inspires such observations of the distin-  
guished dead is not unnatural, but it rests upon a miscon-  
ception of the divine order and purpose. No good man  
is ever a loss, except to the bereaved hearts he leaves be-  
hind. He does not begin to live until he dies, and the seed  
he has sown begins to germinate and to bring forth the  
harvest. No man that completes his task and finishes his

course leaves a vacancy in death,—not even if he were a  
Hahnemann, a Faraday, a Fulton, a Galen, a Gladstone, a  
Simms, a Lincoln, a McKinley, or a Beecher. In dying  
the places occupied by such men die with them. This is  
true also of our EGBERT GUERNSEY. His mantle will fall  
upon the shoulders of no one. His position was unique.  
He will have no successor. His tasks were finished; his  
accounts closed. The objects for which he lived and  
labored, were accomplished. The sphere in which he  
moved has ceased to exist. In the providence of God  
other men will come after him and do their work, and fill  
their spheres, reaping what he has sown, having their  
ways smoothed by him, and their tasks rendered easier  
for a GUERNSEY's preceding them. Thus will his bene-  
ficient influence be felt, live, and grow in power and po-  
tency with the eternal years.



The following inscription placed upon a marble tablet in the main hall of the Metropolitan Hospital was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies by the HON. JAMES M. TULLY, Com. of Charities on May 5, 1904.

IN MEMORY OF  
EGBERT GUERNSEY, M.D.L.L.D.  
BORN JULY 8TH, 1829. DIED SEPTEMBER 19TH, 1903.  
PRESIDENT OF THE MEDICAL BOARD  
OF  
METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL

FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON WARD'S ISLAND  
IN 1875 UNTIL HIS DEATH.

WITH HIM ORIGINATED THE PLAN  
WHICH DEVELOPED INTO THE FOUNDING  
OF THIS INSTITUTION AND  
THE RECOGNITION OF THE  
HOMEOPATHIC PROFESSION

OF MEDICINE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC CHARITIES OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED BY THIS DEPARTMENT  
AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS UNSELFISH DEVOTION  
TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE, HIS BROAD  
PHILANTHROPY AND LOYAL CITIZENSHIP.

HOMER FOLKS,  
COMMISSIONER.

JAMES E. DOUGHERTY,  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER.

Among the many testimonials presented to Miss Guernsey were:—  
Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Hospital, Blackwells Island.

House Staff of the Metropolitan Hospital, Blackwells Island.  
Board of Trustees of the Hahnemann Hospital, New York.  
Ladies Aid Association of the Hahnemann Hospital.  
New York Homeopathic Medical Society.  
Clinical Club, New York City.



*Cedar Lawn, Fishkill-on-the-Hudson.*

*The home Dr. Guernsey loved so well and where all  
his summers were spent.*

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**END OF  
TITLE**